AMMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

On page 14, prior to line 3, please add the following:

What is claimed is:

Claims 1 – 27 (Cancelled).

Please add new claims 28 – 64 as follows:

28. (New) A shift lever mechanism comprising:
a housing;
a lever having a longitudinal axis, said lever being at least partially disposed within said housing;
a pivoting member in operational communication with said lever being adapted to facilitate pivoting of said lever into a plurality of positions; and
a biasing member disposed proximate said lever, said biasing member selectively applying a biasing force to said lever moving said lever into at least one biased position.

29. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said pivoting member further comprises a pivoting means adapted to facilitate pivoting of said lever.

30. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said biasing member further comprises a biasing means operable to bias said lever into at least one biased neutral position.

31. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said biasing member is disposed on said lever coaxially therewith.

32. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said biasing member operates in a generally non-transverse direction relative to said longitudinal axis of said lever.

33. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said biasing member selectively applies a biasing force operable to oppose displacement of said lever in any direction.

34. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said housing includes a longitudinal axis, said applied biasing force is generally in a direction of said longitudinal axis of said housing.

35. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein in a biased position, said longitudinal axis of said lever is generally parallel to a direction of said biasing force.

36. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said biasing member further includes a first element and a second element adapted to be displaceable in a direction generally parallel to said longitudinal axis of said lever, a third element being adapted to be fixed relative to said lever, and a biasing element being disposed intermediate said second element and said third element.

37. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 36, wherein said lever extends through said first element, said second element, said third element, and said biasing element from a generally coaxial arrangement therewith.

38. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 36, wherein said biasing element is a spring.

39. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 36, wherein said first element is adapted to engage with a stop means.

40. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 39, wherein said stop means is operable to prevent pivotal displacement of said first element in at least one direction.

41. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 39, wherein said stop means is disposed on an inner wall of said housing.

42. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 41, wherein said stop means includes a region of reduced diameter of said inner wall.

43. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 39, wherein said stop means is disposed on said lever.

44. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 39, wherein said stop means is disposed on a transmission system with which said lever is in operational communication.

45. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, further comprising a second biasing member.

46. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 45, wherein said second biasing member is substantially the same as said biasing member.

47. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 45, wherein said pivoting member is disposed on said lever between said biasing member and said second biasing member.

48. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said pivoting member further comprises a spherical element.

49. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 48, wherein said spherical element is disposed in a retaining cup and is operable to pivotally move therein.

50. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 48, wherein said spherical element is fixed to said lever thereby forming a pivot point on said lever.

51. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 48, wherein said spherical element is fixed to said lever by a retaining pin.

52. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 48, wherein said spherical element forms an integral part of said lever thereby forming a pivot point on said lever.

53. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 48, wherein said lever extends through said spherical element to form an arrangement generally coaxial therewith.

54. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 48, wherein said spherical element is formed from a plastic or a metallic material composition.

55. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 28, wherein said pivoting member further comprises a plurality of pins adapted to engage with each other to form a pivotable arrangement.

56. (New) A shift lever mechanism comprising:
a housing having a housing longitudinal axis;
a retaining cup disposed within said housing;
a lever having a first end, a second end, and lever longitudinal axis, said lever being at least partially disposed within said housing;
a pivoting member disposed in said retaining cup and being in operational communication with said lever, said pivoting member being adapted to facilitate pivoting of said lever into a plurality positions; and
a biasing member disposed proximate said lever, said biasing member selectively applying a biasing force to said lever moving said lever into at least one predetermined position.

57. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 56, wherein said biasing member further includes a first element and a second element adapted to be displaceable in a direction generally parallel to said longitudinal axis of said lever, a third element being adapted to be fixed relative to said lever, and a biasing element being disposed intermediate said second element and said third element.

58. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 57, wherein said lever extends through said first element, said second element, said third element, and said biasing element from a generally coaxial arrangement therewith.

59. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 57, wherein said first element is adapted to engage with a stop member.

60. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 59, wherein said stop member is prevents pivotal displacement of said first element in at least one direction.

61. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 59, wherein said stop member is disposed on an inner wall of said housing.

62. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 59, wherein said stop member is in operational communication with said lever.

63. (New) The shift lever mechanism of claim 56, wherein said pivoting member further comprises a plurality of pins selectively engaging each other to form a pivotable arrangement.